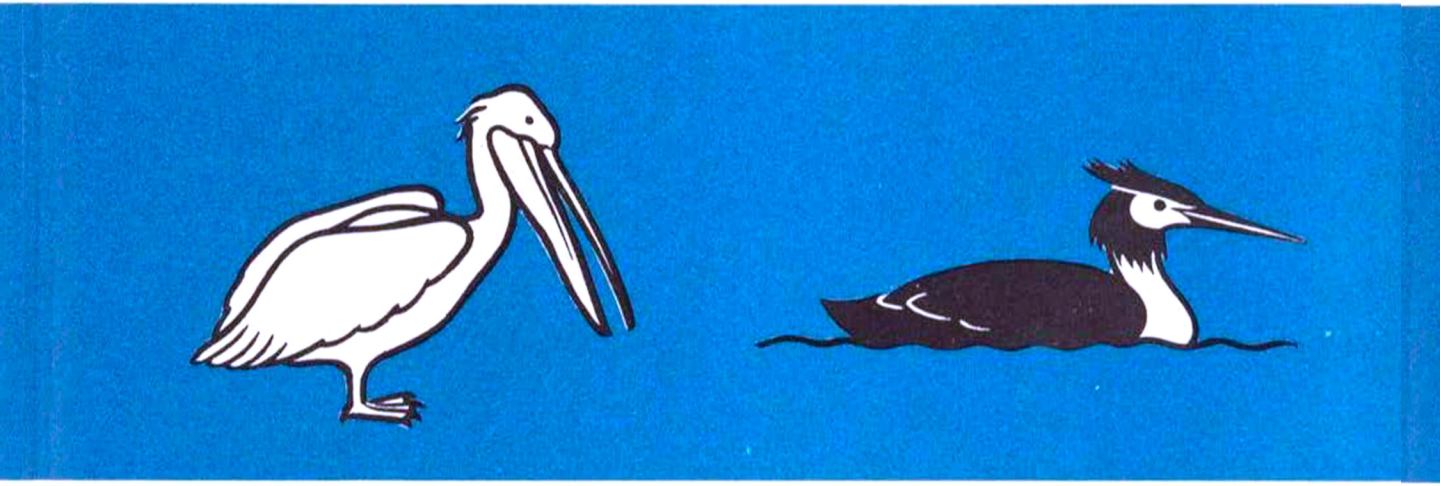
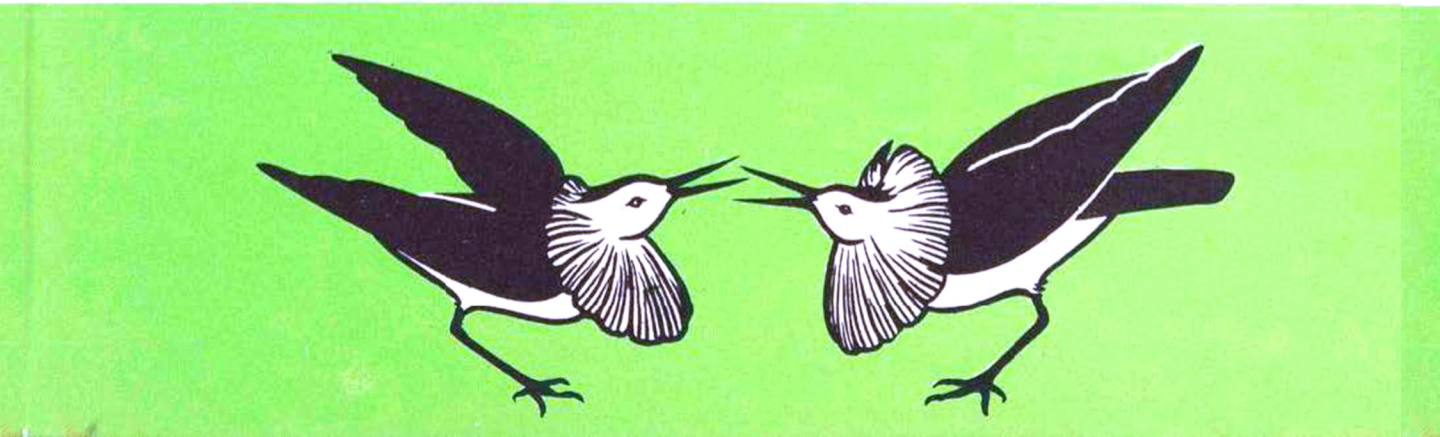
THE WONDER WORLD OF BIRDS

MARIE NEURATH



A PARRISH COLOUR BOOK FOR CHILDREN



THE WONDER WORLD OF BIRDS

by Marie Neurath

Birds, with their lively singing, bright plumage and graceful movements are a never-failing source of interest and curiosity to children. A walk through the spring woods or a visit to the zoo releases a flood of questions. Where does this bird build its nest? How does that one sleep at night? Where have those birds been all the winter?

The answers to questions of this kind are given here in the form of true stories about the lives and habits of birds of many lands: These birds with no nests hatch eggs on their feet—The tailor bird stitches a cradle of leaves—The fishing party of the pelicans—When the cockatoo watchmen sound the alarm—The umbrella town of many nests—Preparing to fly six thousand miles—When the hedge sparrow hatches the cuckoo's egg.

Marie Neurath's simple, direct text and gay one-idea-at-a-time pictures appeal not only to the children; soundly based on thorough research, they will also satisfy the discerning parent.

ALL AGES

See back flap for other titles

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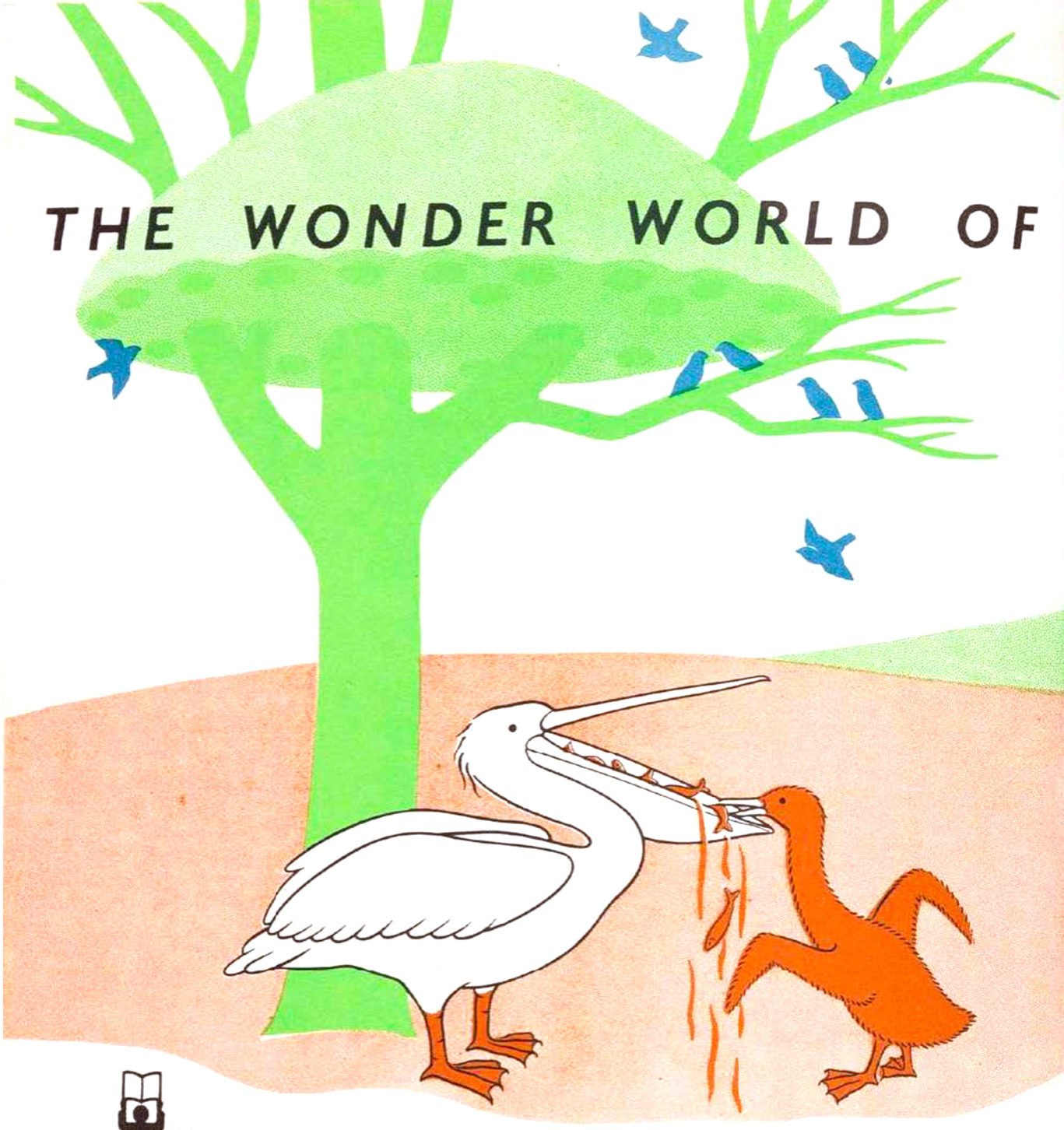
THE WONDER WORLD OF BIRDS

THE WONDER WORLD OF



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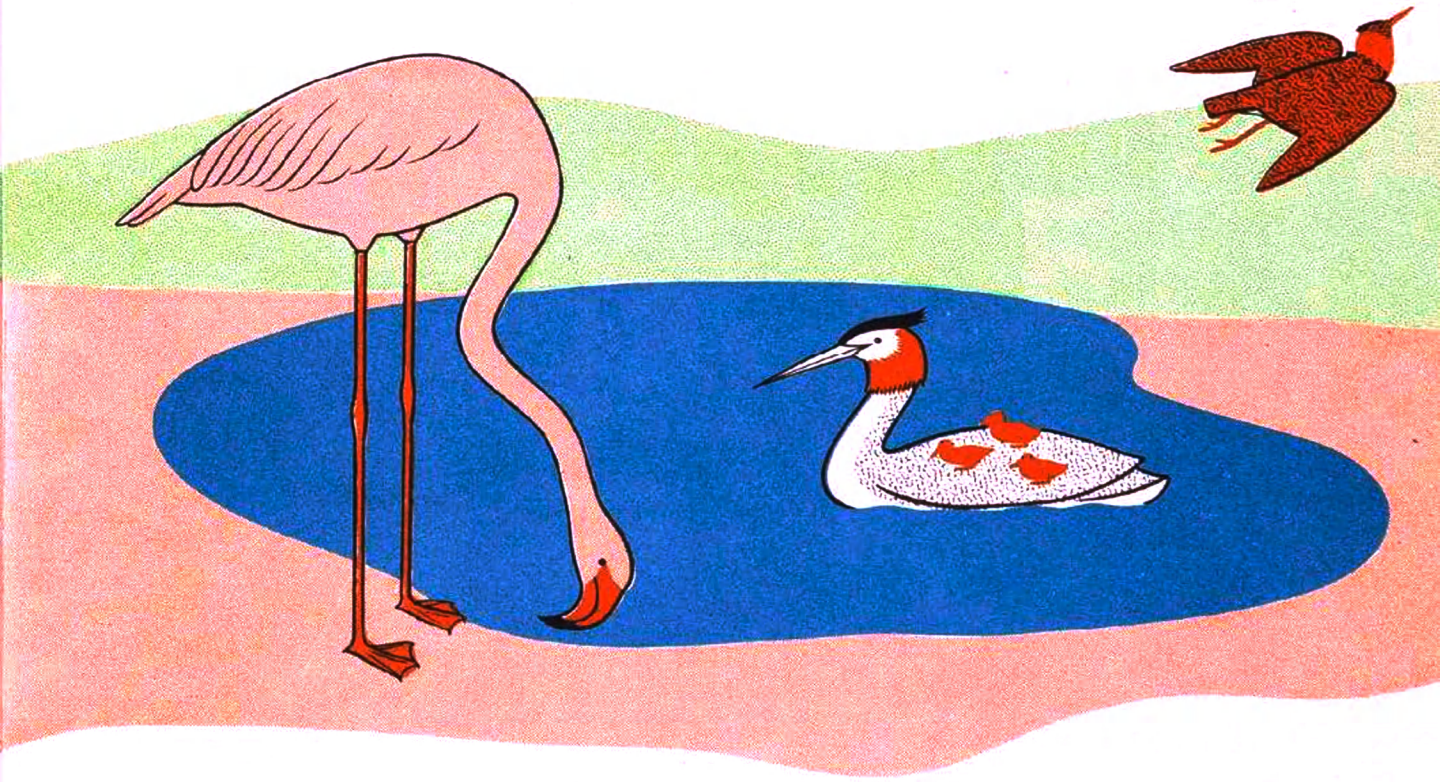
SET AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY GRAPHIC

BIRDS

MARIE NEURATH



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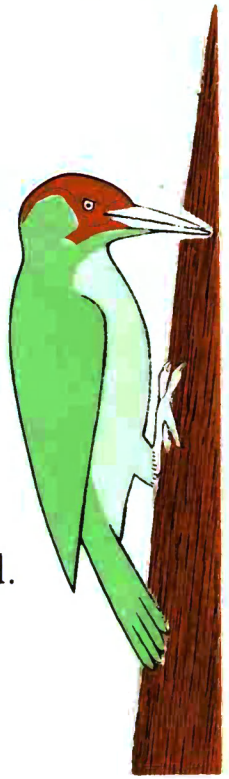
The Biggest Birds of All

Not all birds are like those we see and hear in our gardens. All over the world strange birds with strange habits are to be found. Look at these ostriches. They cannot sing and cannot fly. They are swift, powerful runners, twice as heavy as a man.

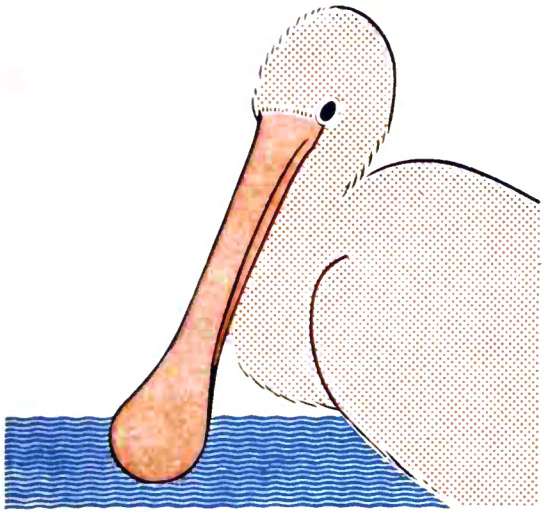
Beaks which are Slender, or Strong, or Sharp

Humming birds are often
no bigger than a man's finger.
With beaks like curved needles
and long, slender tongues,
they can sip the nectar
from flowers, just as bees do.

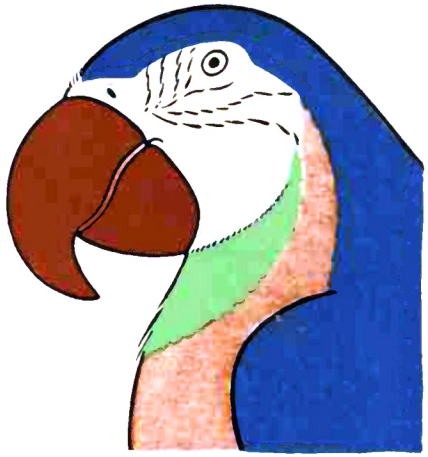
The woodpecker uses
his chisel-like beak
to bore holes into
the solid wood of
growing trees.



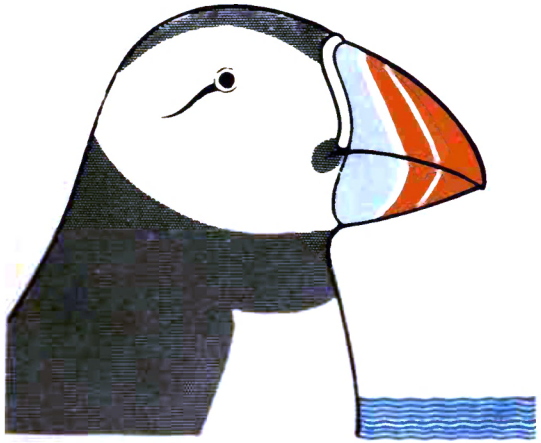
With head upside-
down, the flamingo
fills his beak with mud.
Through spines in his
beak, he sifts out
small water creatures
which he can eat.



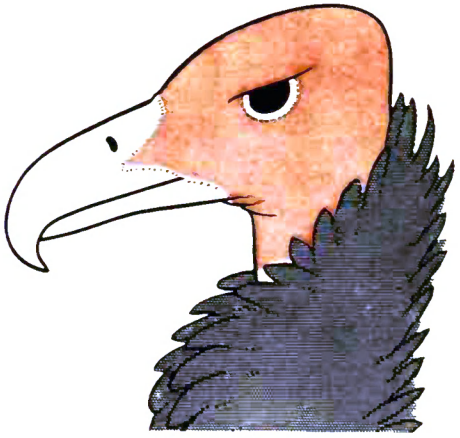
Here is another bird whose bill sifts food. Can you see why it is called a spoonbill?



The macaw's powerful beak can crush nuts which a man would need a hammer to crack.



In its big, striped beak, the puffin carries several fish at once to feed its young ones.



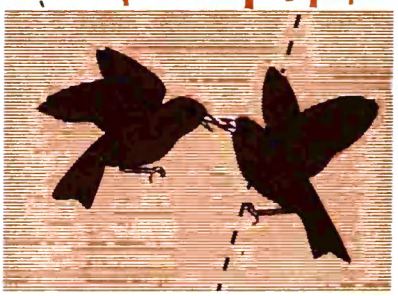
The vulture's beak can strip the flesh from a dead animal's bones and leave them white.

How Each Willow Warbler Wins a Place of His Own

In March the willow warbler cocks leave sunny North Africa and fly northwards to a bushy thicket in Europe.

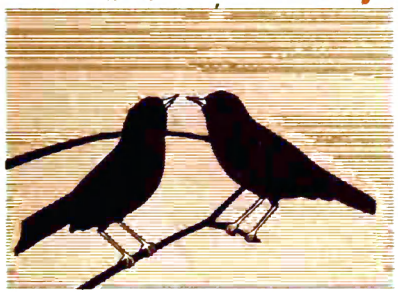
After a time, each goes to a different part of the thicket.

That part he claims as his own. His song warns the rest to stay out or he will fight them.



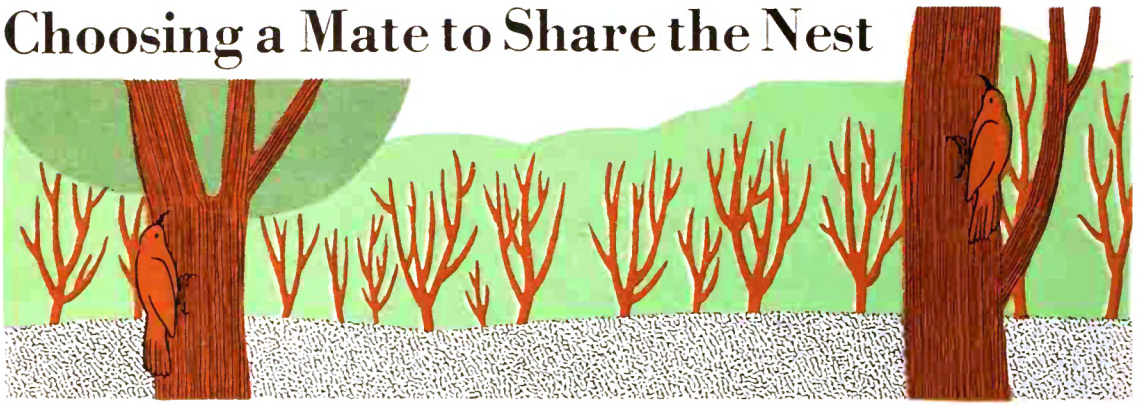
The willow warbler hens, which begin their long journey a little later than the cock birds, arrive a week or so afterwards.

Each hen is attracted by the singing of one particular cock.



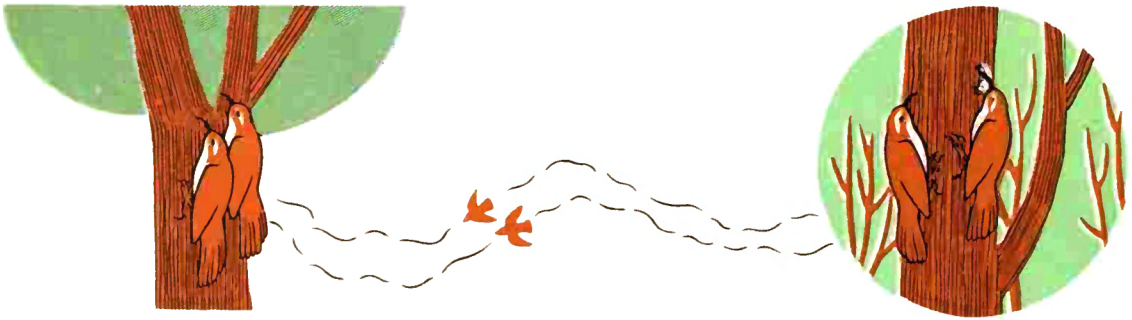
She flies to his part of the wood and becomes his mate. She builds her nest nearby and lays her eggs; then she and her mate rear their family together.

Choosing a Mate to Share the Nest

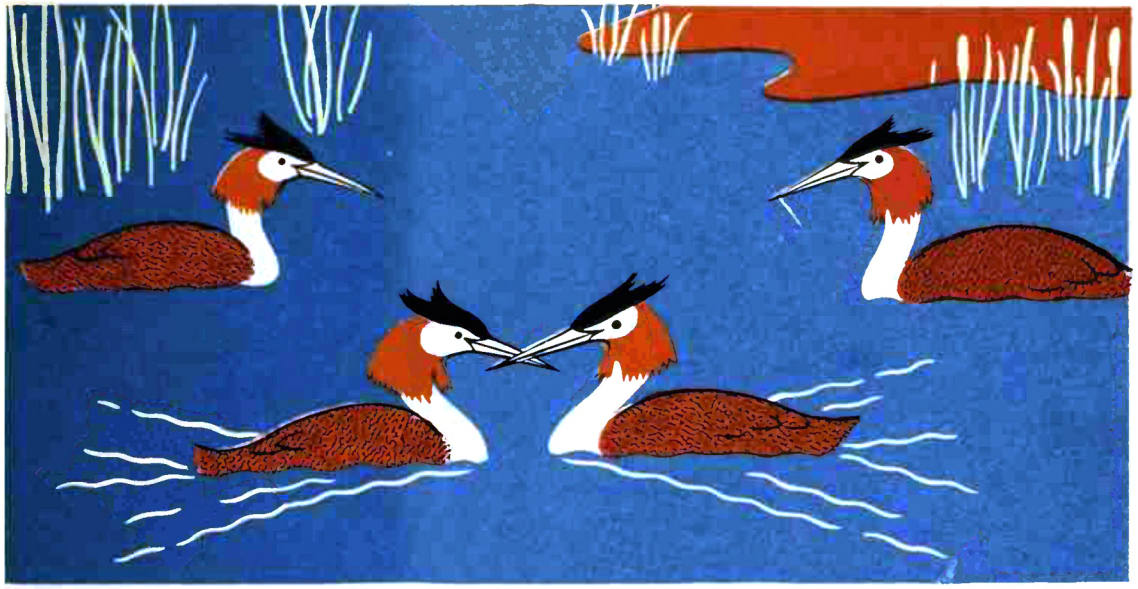


In early spring the cock and hen treecreeper live in separate trees. The cock sings his song to the hen.

After a while
the cock bird
searches for grubs.
When he finds one
he takes it to the hen.

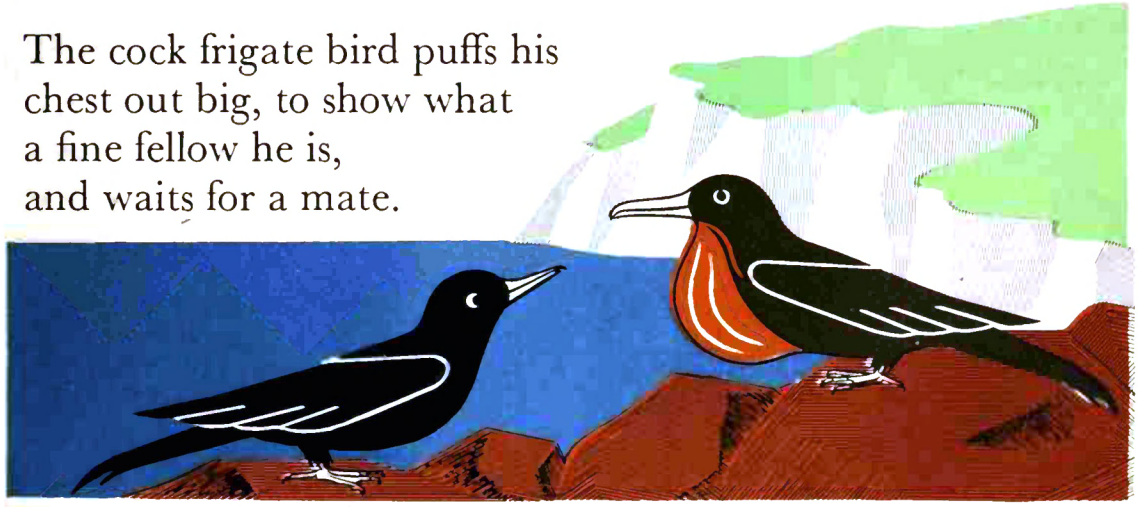


If she accepts, the two will become mates and live together.

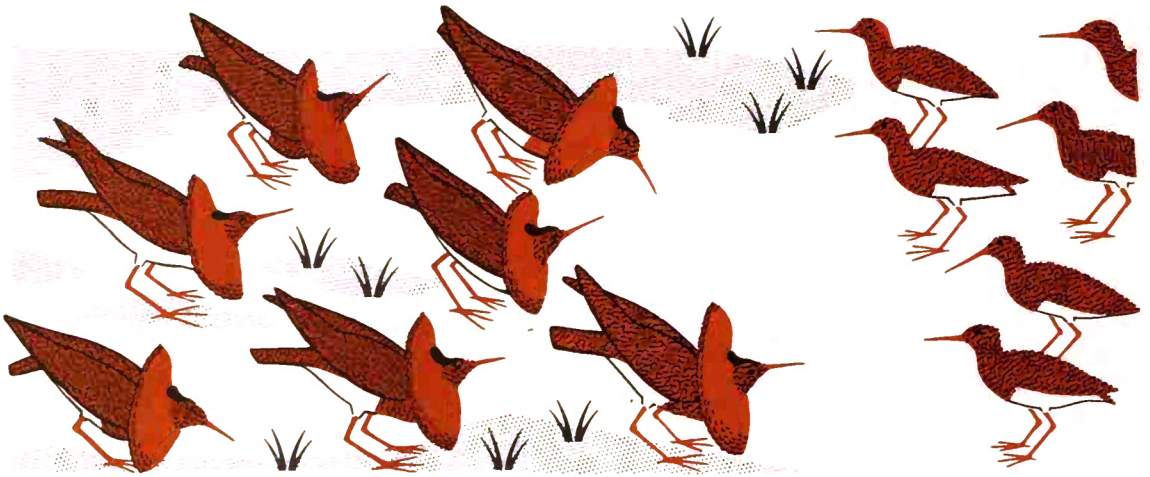


From a distance, the male and female grebe wave their crested heads at one another. Then they swim closer and touch beaks. Sometimes they twine their long necks together.

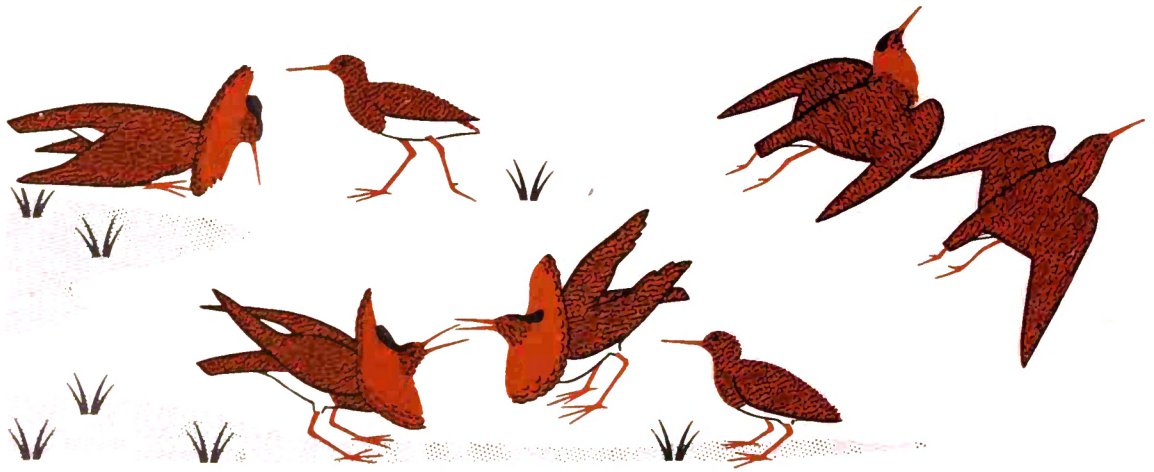
The cock frigate bird puffs his
chest out big, to show what
a fine fellow he is,
and waits for a mate.



The Dance of the Ruffs



Ruffs have large outdoor gatherings at which the males show off their fine ruff-feathers. The females, or reeves, stand by.



The males spread their ruff-feathers and make rushes at each other. Some are driven away. The others win the reeves.

The Umbrella Town of Many Nests

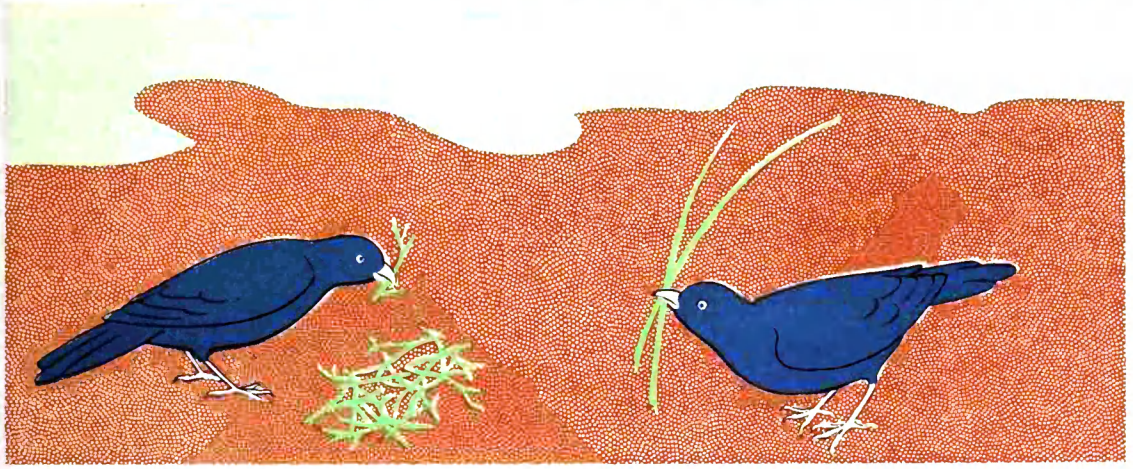
The sociable weaver birds of South Africa build huge umbrella-shaped "towns" in the boughs of a tree. When they have made the "thatching" from bits of coarse straw, they tunnel into it from beneath to make many separate nesting chambers.

The Tailor Bird Stitches a Cradle of Leaves

The tailor birds of India and China make a cradle of leaves to hold their nests. They choose two or three big, fleshy leaves hanging side by side and make a row of tiny holes round the edges with their beaks.

Then they find bits of hairy stuff and draw them through the holes to hold the leaves together. Each "stitch" has to be made separately. Inside the cradle they build a soft, woolly nest for their eggs.

Painters and Decorators: The Bower Birds

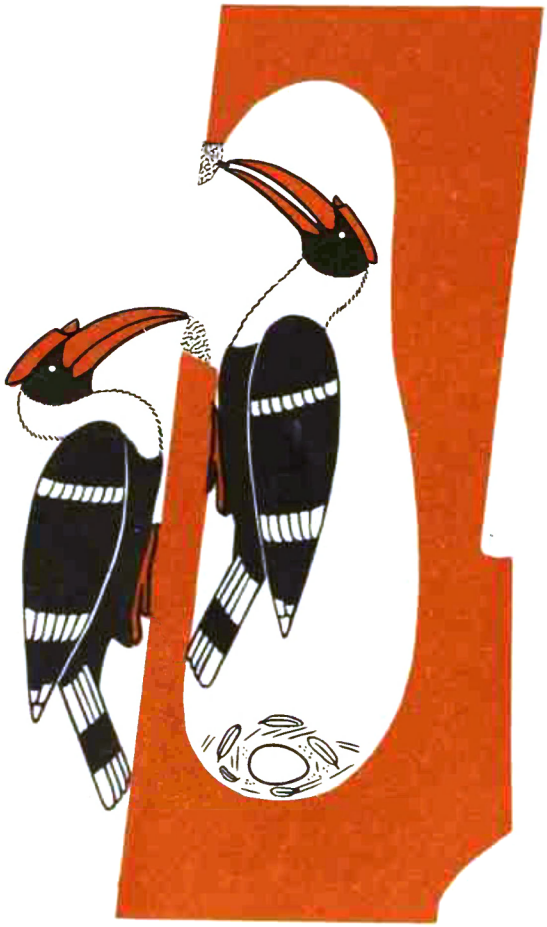


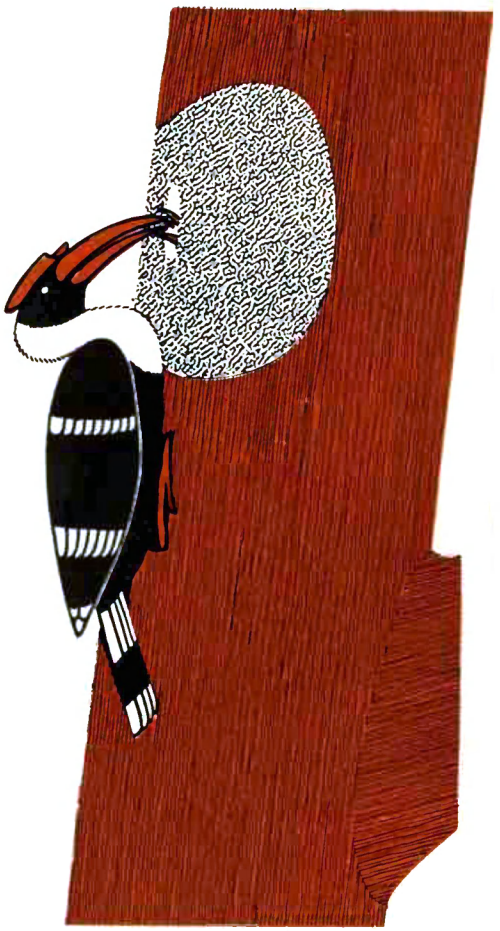
Using twigs for the base and long sticks for the walls, these Australian bower birds are building their playground.

When it is finished, they paint the inside with juice from berries and arrange shells, flowers and feathers round it.

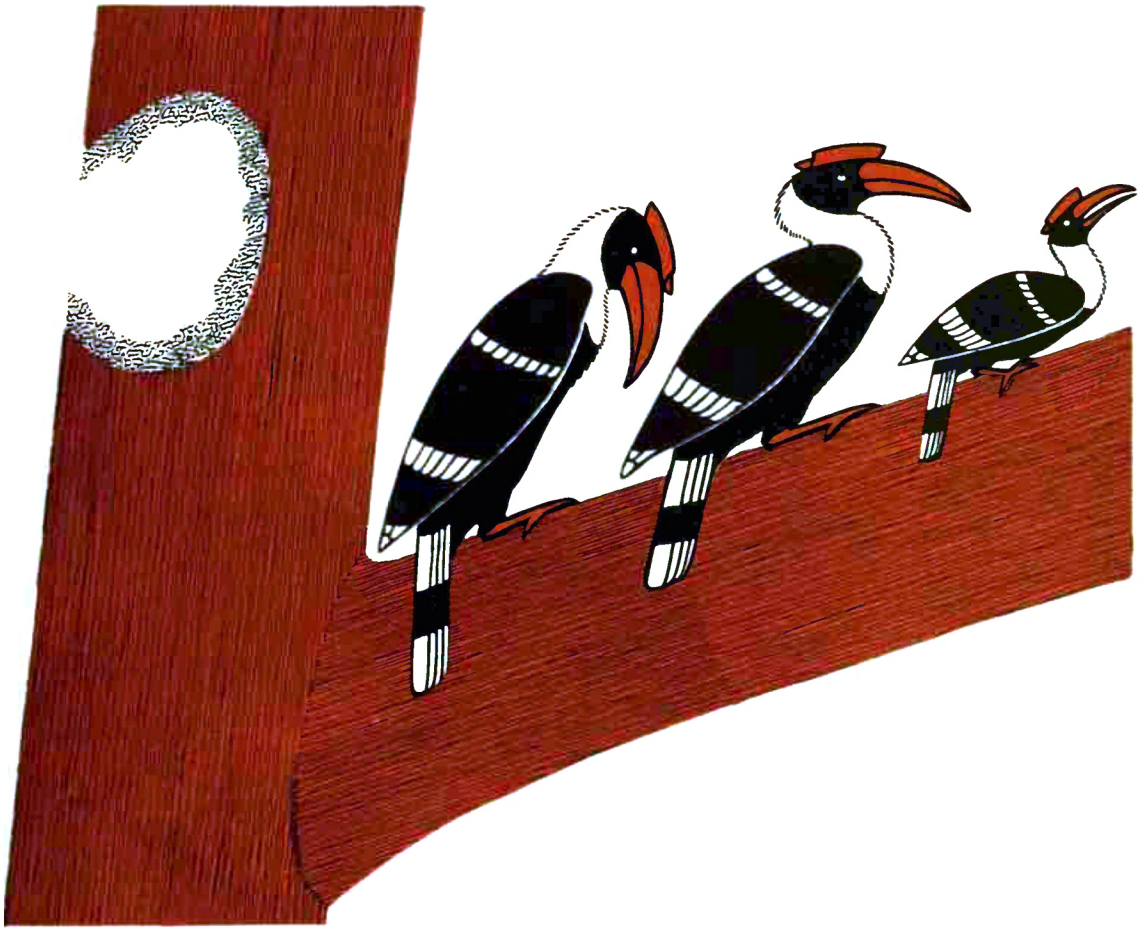
He Shuts up His Family to Keep it Safe

The hen hornbill of India makes her nest and lays her egg inside a hollow tree. The cock helps her to seal up the entrance with a plaster made from the bark of a tree and saliva, leaving only a small slit. Then, for weeks, he searches for food and feeds his imprisoned mate through the slit.

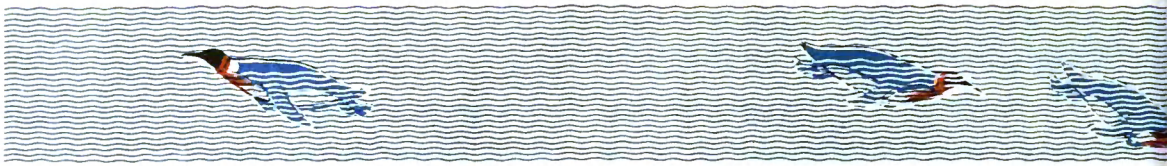




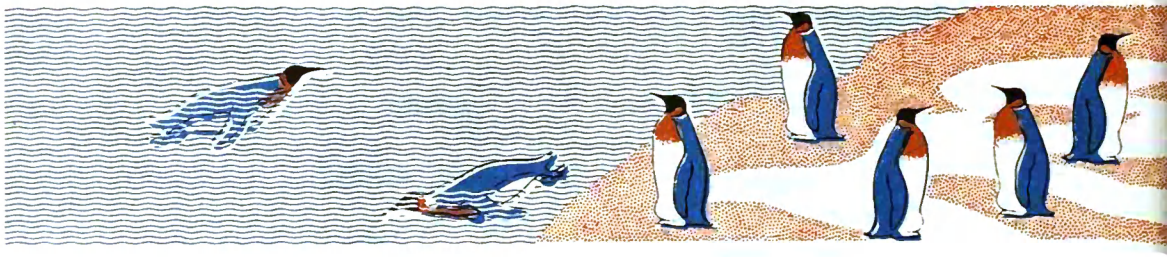
When the young one hatches out it is helpless, and the mother, who loses most of her feathers, cannot protect it. But inside the prison no harm can come to it from monkeys or hungry snakes. When the time comes to break down the "wall," the father is thin and tired, but his family are well fed and safe.



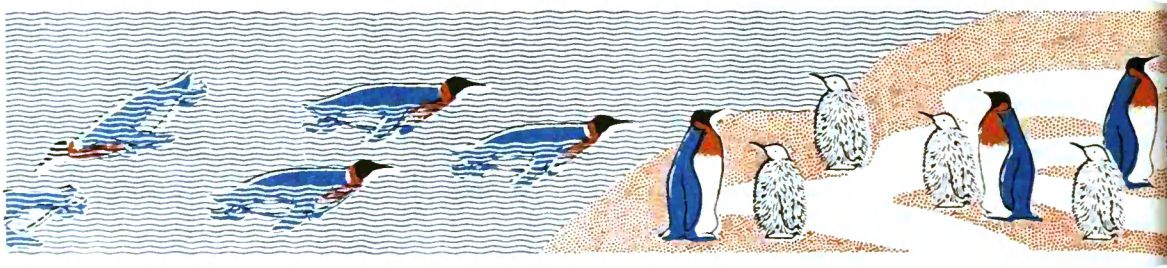
These Birds with No Nests Hatch Eggs o



King penguins cannot fly. Most of the time they swim about in the

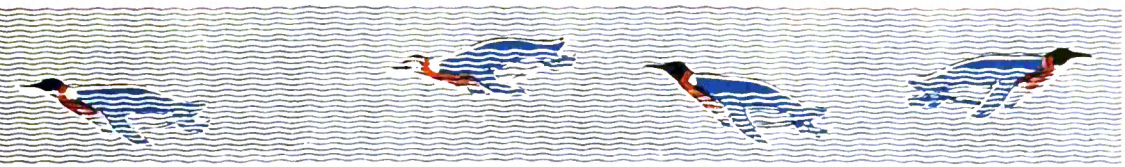


Near the icy South Pole, where they live, there are no twigs or grasses for building cosy nests. The mother penguin rests her egg on her webbed feet where it is covered by a pouch of skin and kept warm. Father also takes his turn at carrying it.

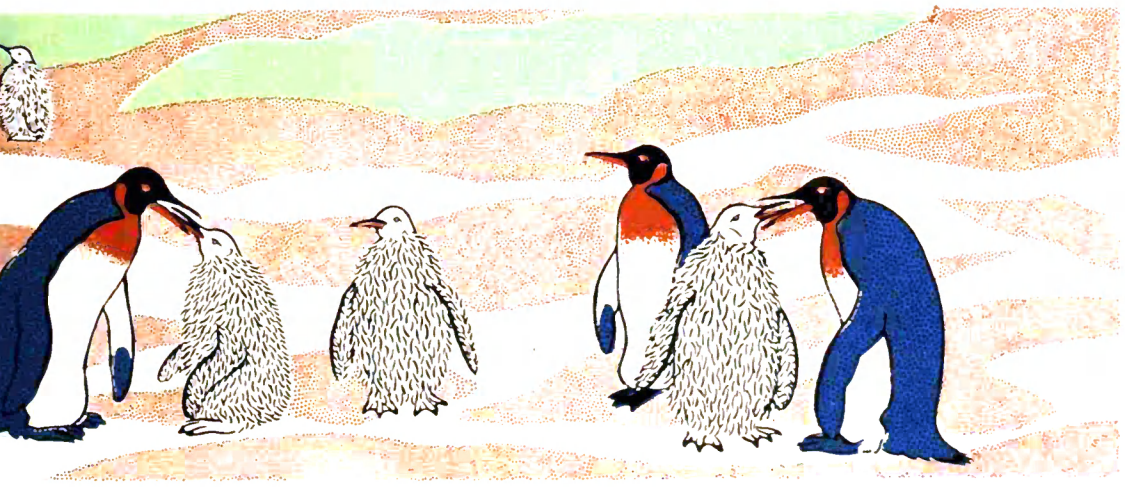


The young birds, hatched out at the end of winter, are small with soft fur-like coats. But, well fed by their parents, they soon grow and get their first fluffy feathers. By next winter they are big and strong enough to face the biting cold.

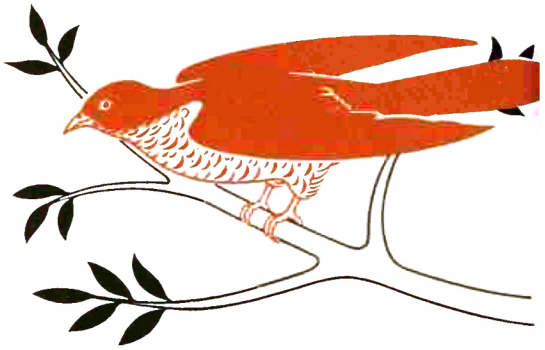
eir Feet



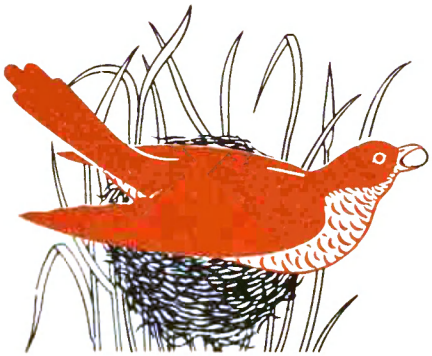
using their wings as paddles and steering with their tails.

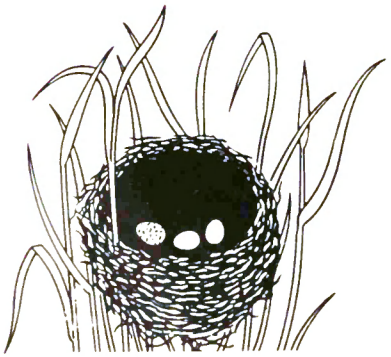


When the Hedge Sparrow Hatches tl

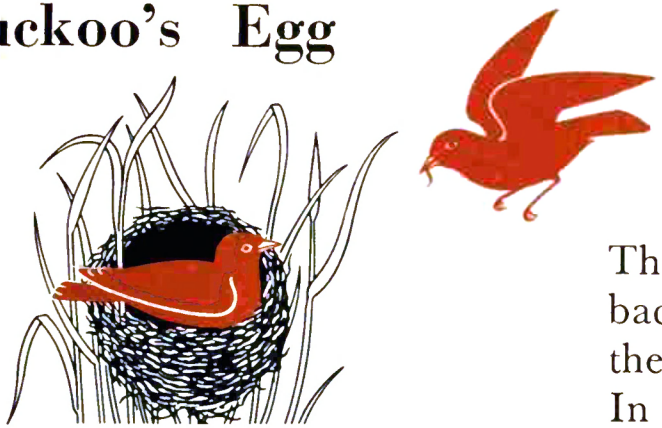


It is an April day in England. The mother cuckoo watches patiently until the hedge sparrow flies away. Then she goes to its nest, seizes an egg in her beak, and lays one of her own in its place. Later she eats the stolen egg.





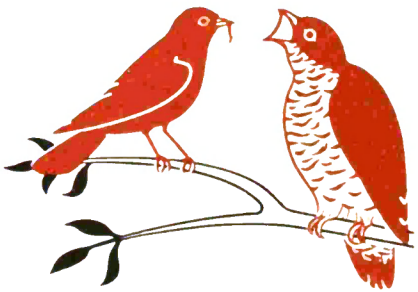
uckoo's Egg



The hedge sparrow comes back to her nest and sits on the eggs again.

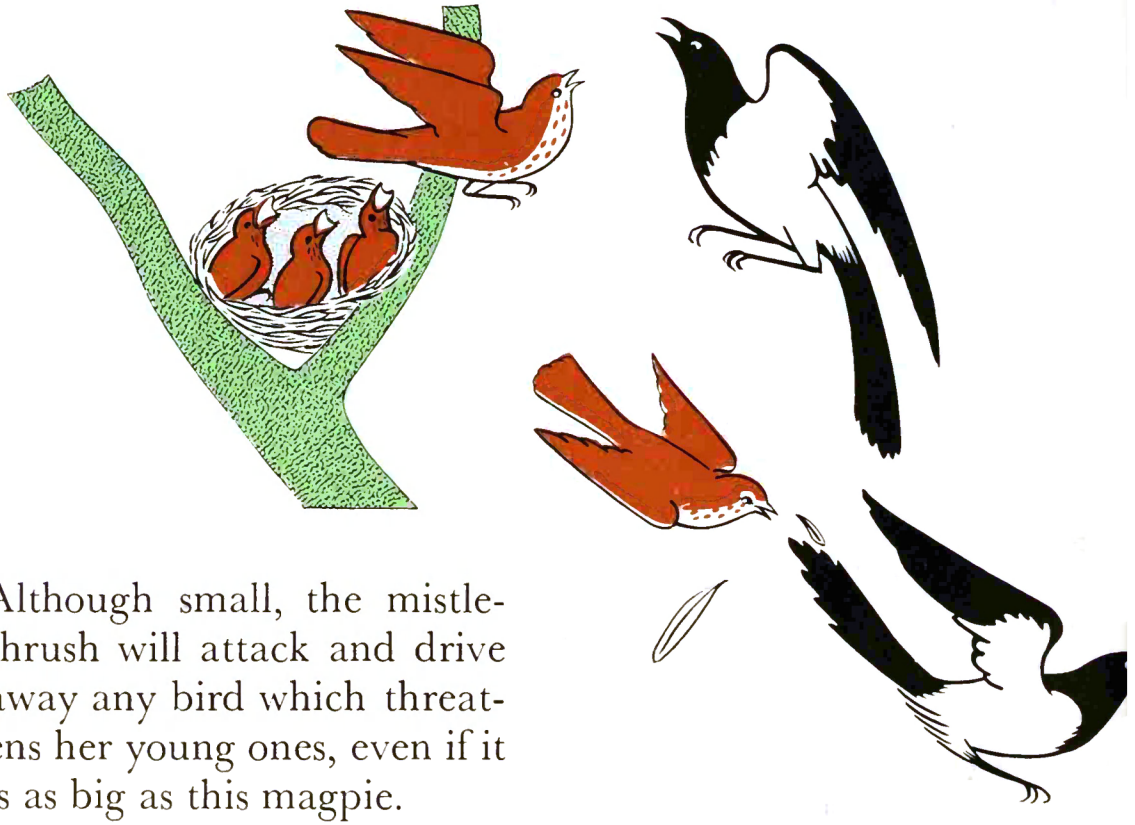
In time the young birds hatch out—first the cuckoo, then the sparrows. The baby cuckoo grows faster than the others and is much stronger. One by one he pushes the sparrows out of the nest.

The hedge sparrow goes on feeding her greedy foster-child until he is twice as big as she is.



Protecting the Young Ones Before They can Fly

When her owlets are in danger, the mother owl takes them one at a time in her strong beak and, flying silently across the night sky, carries them to a safe place.

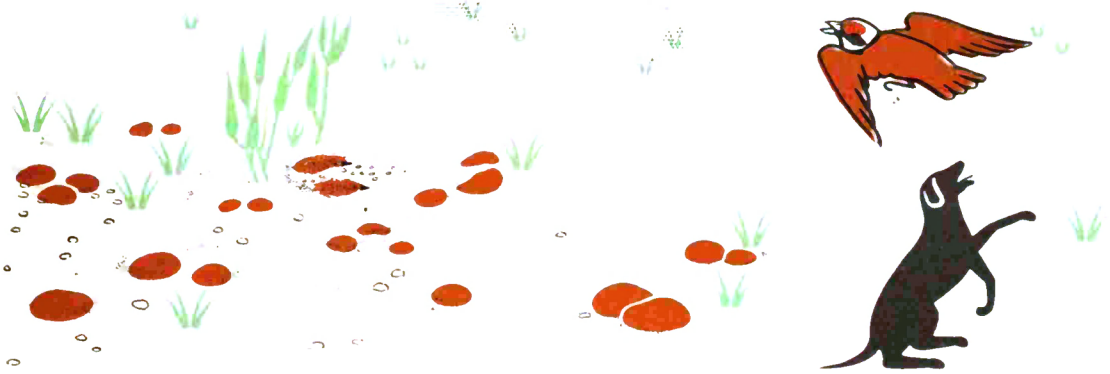


Although small, the mistle-thrush will attack and drive away any bird which threatens her young ones, even if it is as big as this magpie.

The ringed plover builds a rough, almost flat nest on a lonely part of the seashore. Her chicks are colored rather like the rocks and stones about, and it is not at all easy for an enemy to see them.

But when he has seen the mother, this dog may find the nest.

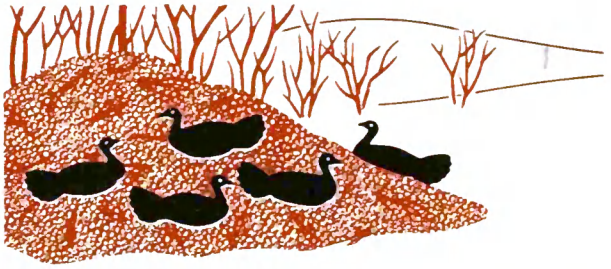
The plover flutters away, pretending to be hurt, and he follows.



When the dog is far from the nest she flies back.

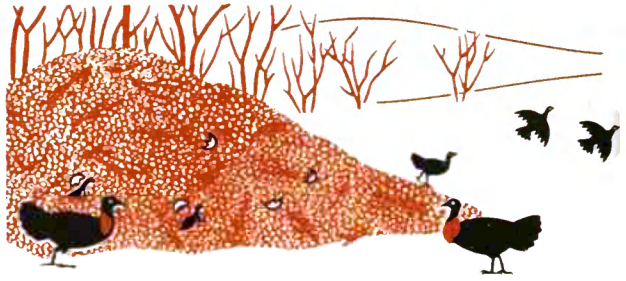
Hatching the Brush-Turkey's Eggs

Brush-turkey cocks, which live in eastern Australia, build a huge pile of dead leaves and grass where the hens lay their eggs.



Once the eggs are laid, the hens fly away. The cock birds cover the eggs and stand guard over them, leaving the heat of the pile to hatch them.

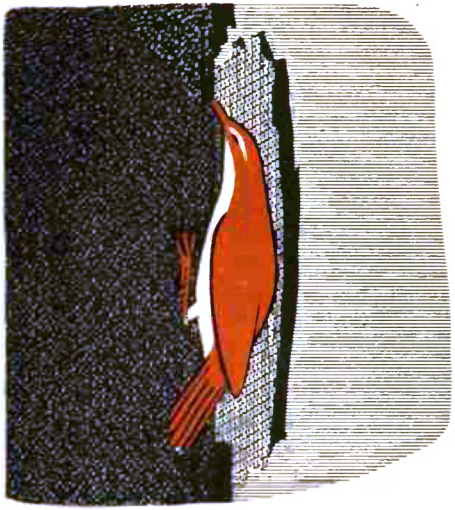
When the shells break, the young chicks already have their feathers. Within an hour or so they can fly away.



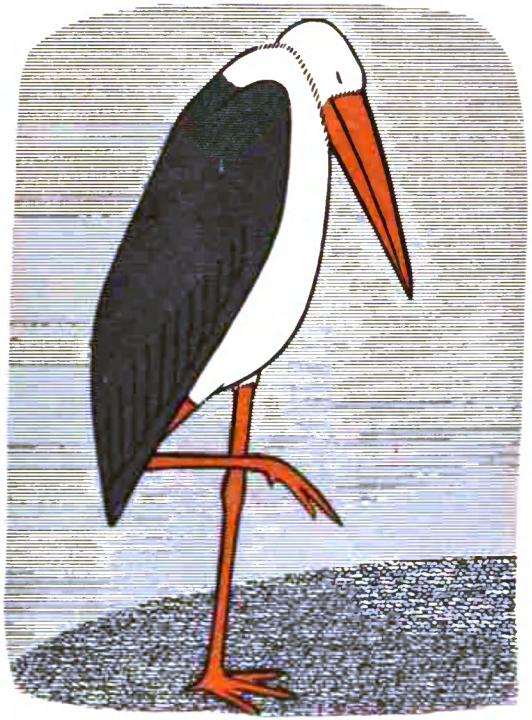
Some Strange Ways in which Birds Sleep

Head tucked under wing, the wren sleeps perched on a twig.

The little grebe falls asleep floating on the water.

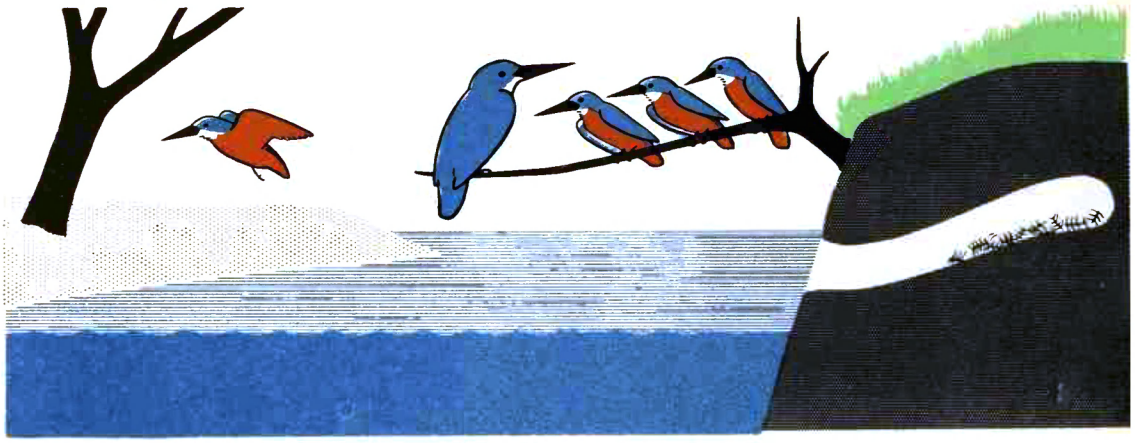


The treecreeper presses beak, toes and tail to a tree-trunk.

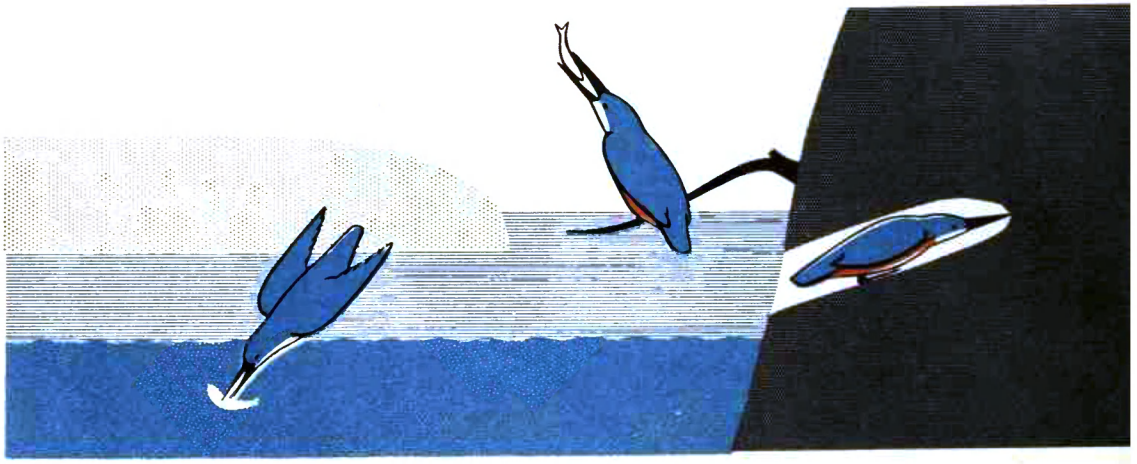


The marabou goes to sleep standing on one leg.

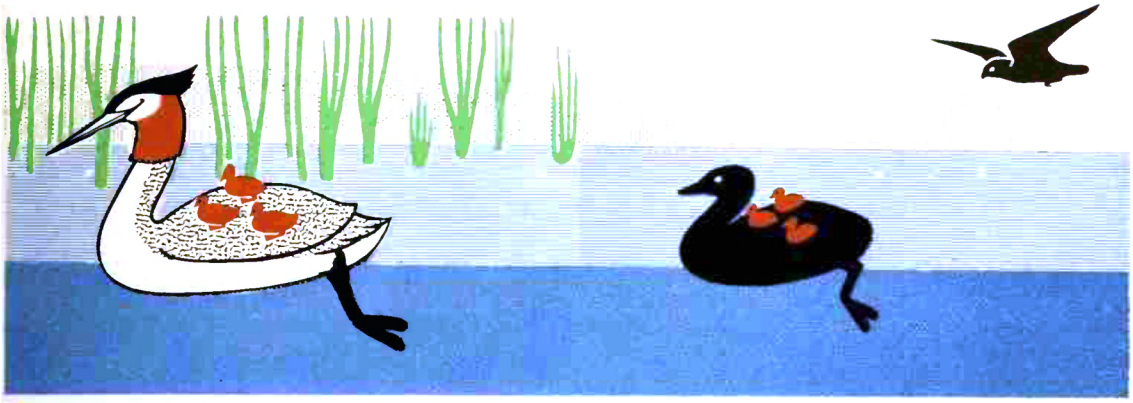
Diving Birds which Live by the River



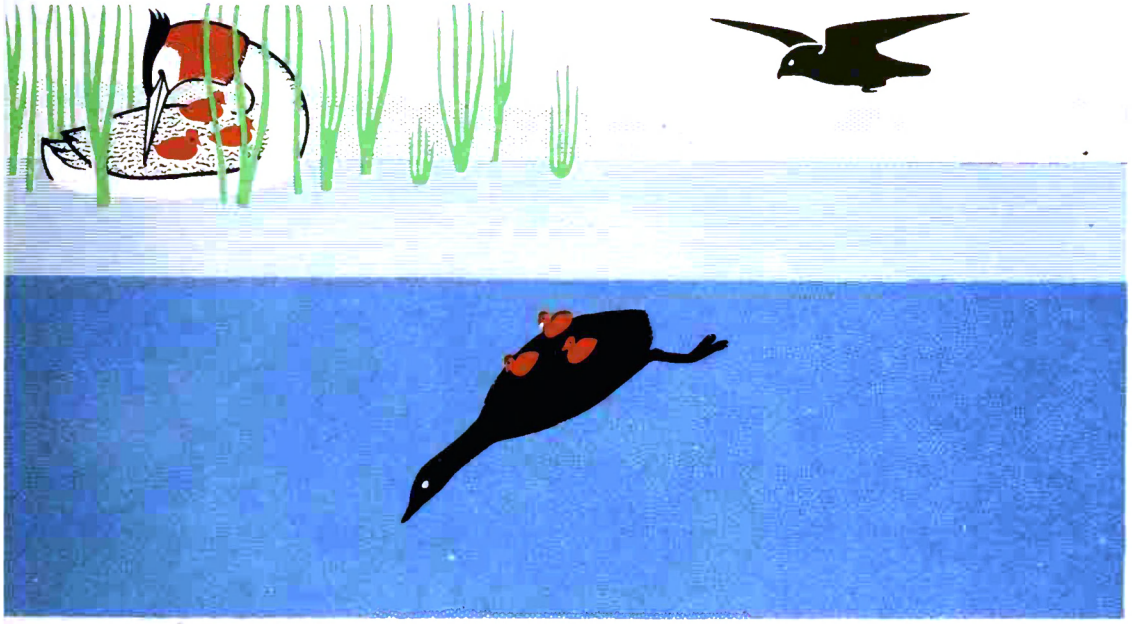
Below the bough where the young kingfishers sit is a tunnel. There they were brought up in a nest made of fishbones.



When they grow up they make their own tunnels, and live always by the river. They watch the water patiently, then suddenly dive. In a flash they catch a fish and are out again.

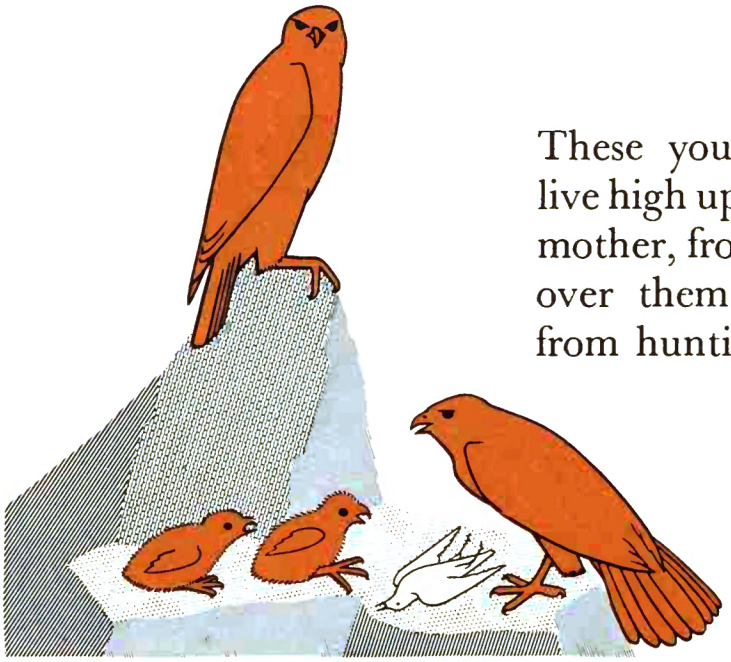


These two grebes both carry their young ones on their backs.



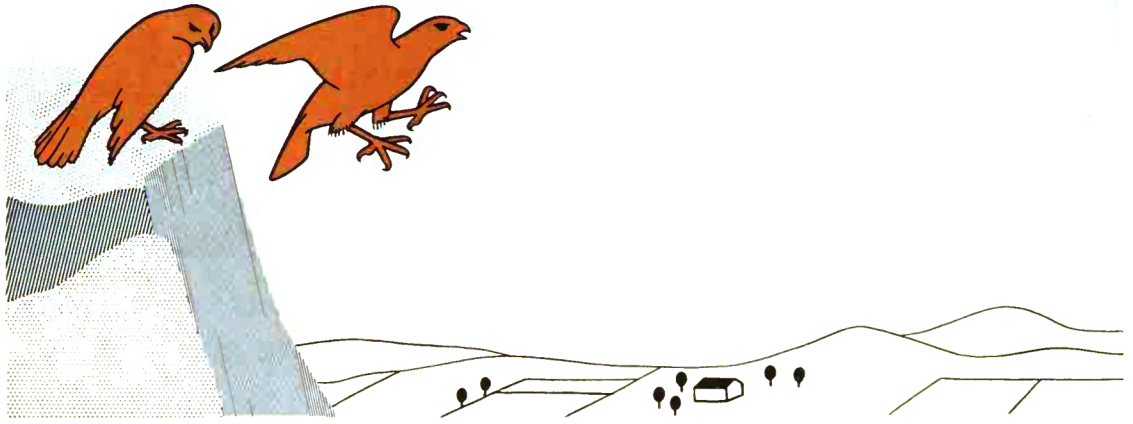
A falcon comes, and both must protect their chicks. The crested grebe, neck held over her babies, hides in the reeds. The little grebe dives like a submarine, her chicks clinging on.

The Swift-Flying Falcon which Soars a



These young peregrine falcons live high up on a mountain. Their mother, from a tall rock, watches over them. Their father, back from hunting, brings them food.

When they first try to fly, a fall from such a great height would mean death. Sometimes the mother stays nearby, watching.



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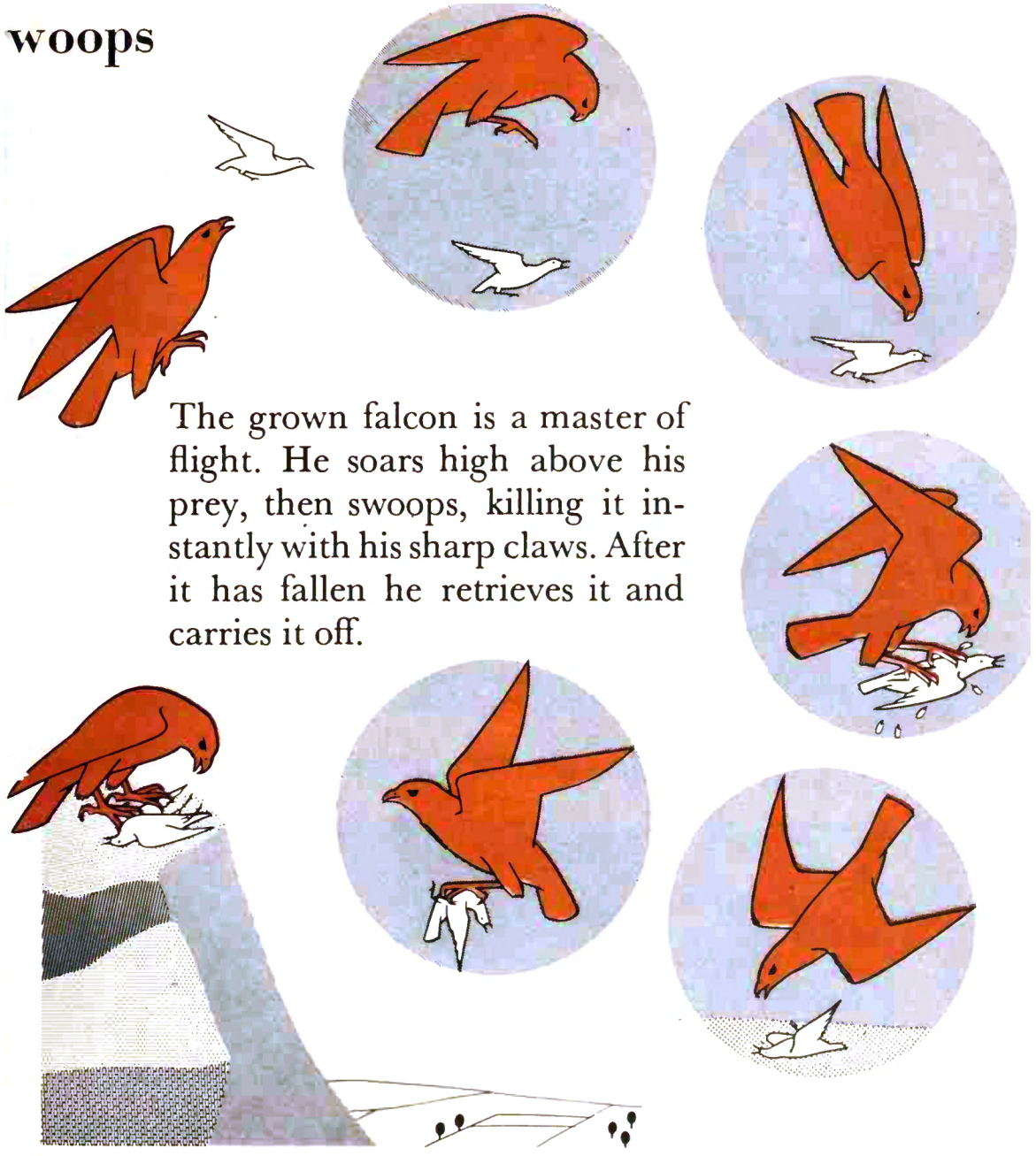
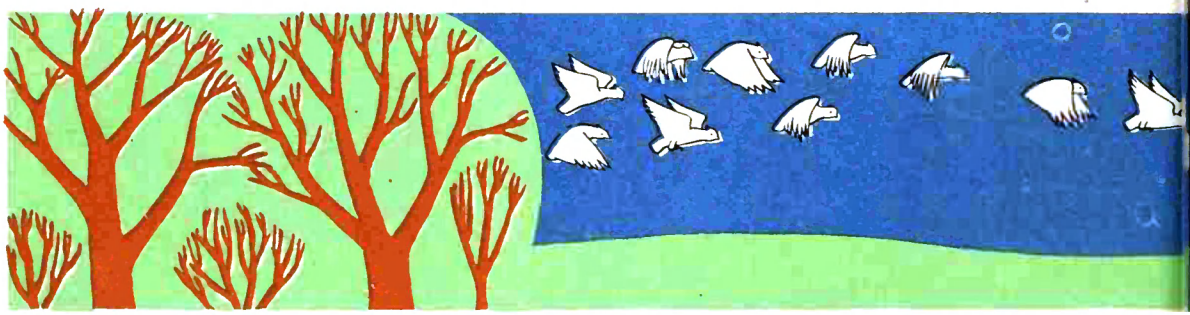


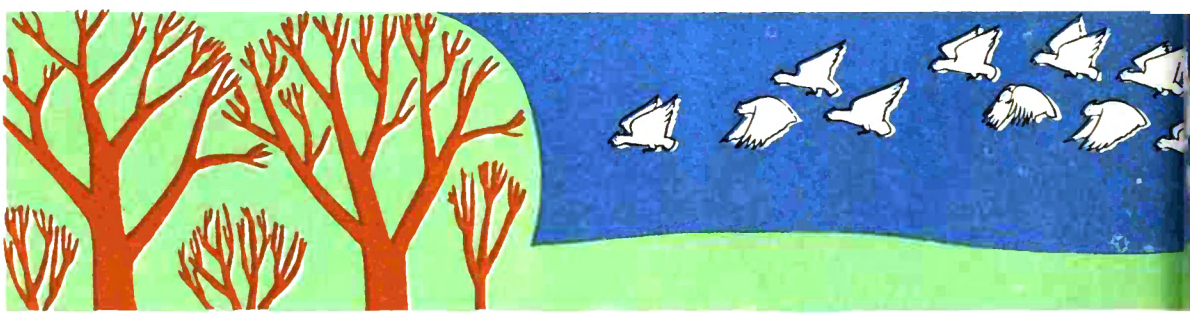
The grown falcon is a master of flight. He soars high above his prey, then swoops, killing it instantly with his sharp claws. After it has fallen he retrieves it and carries it off.

When the Cockatoo Watchmen Sound th

These Australian cockatoos have spied a field of young corn.

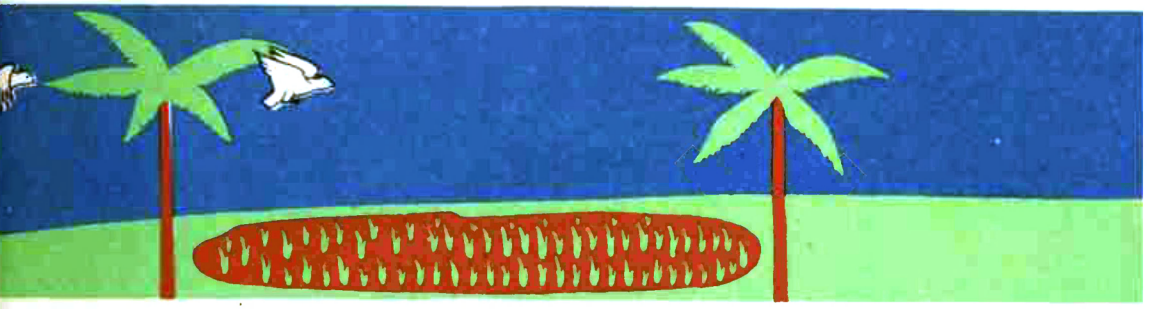


Suddenly the whole flock make for the field and begin eating.

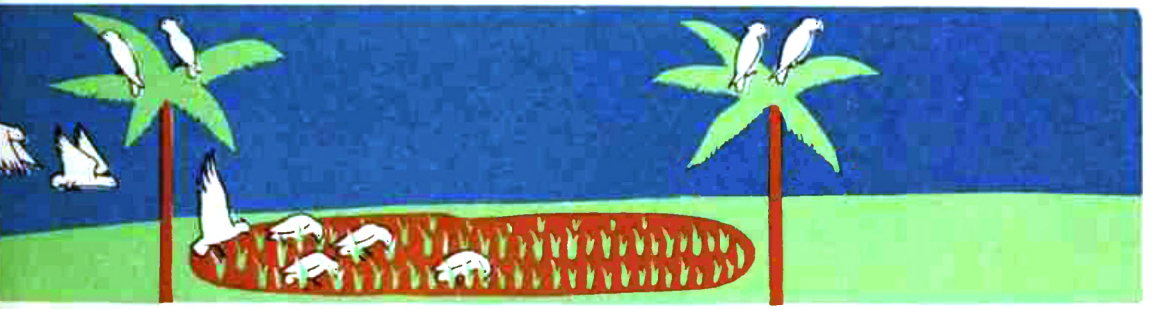


Still on the look-out, the watchmen see a man with a gun.

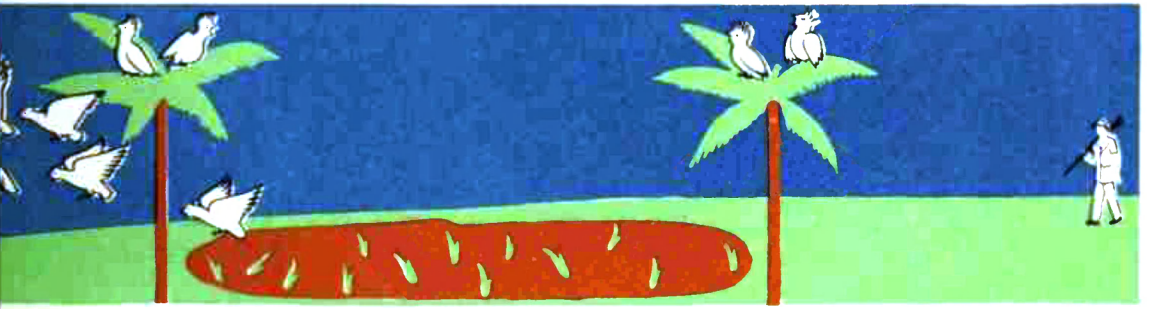
arm



A few fly there as watchmen to make sure there is no danger.



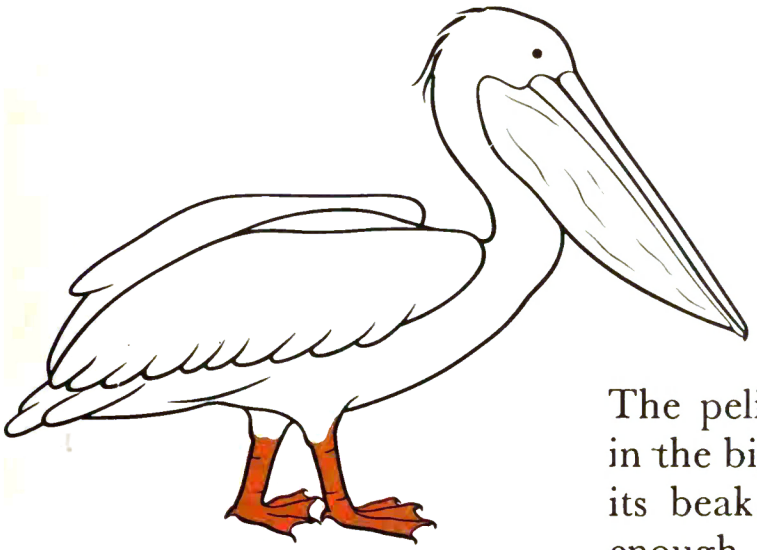
The watchmen, seeing all is well, have given the "safety" call.

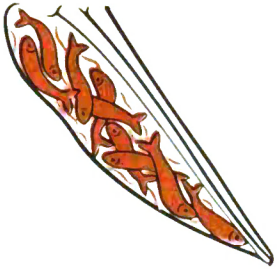


They sound the alarm and the flock fly off to the wood.

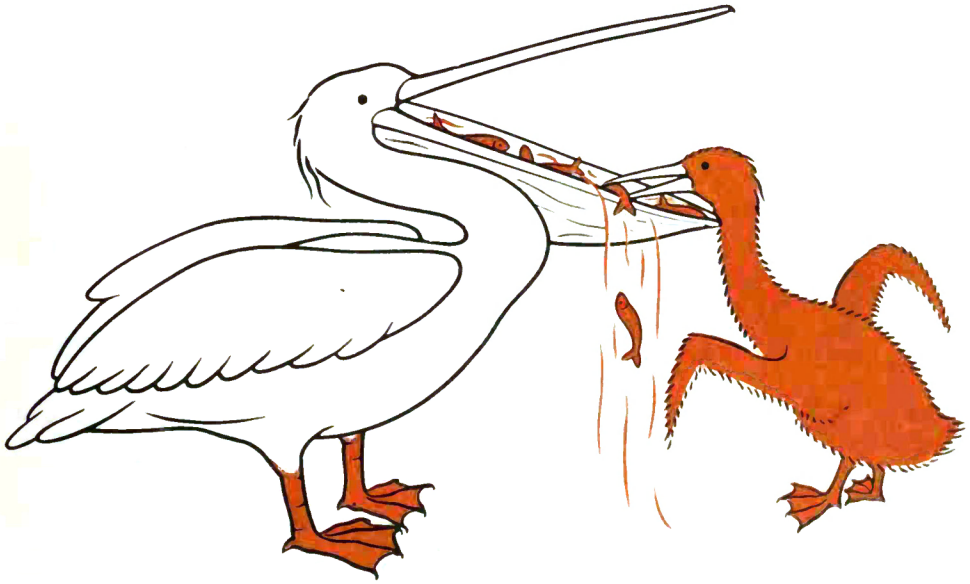
The Fishing Party of the Pelicans

Pelicans fish in groups. Wading shorewards in line, they drive the fish into shallow water and catch them in their beaks.

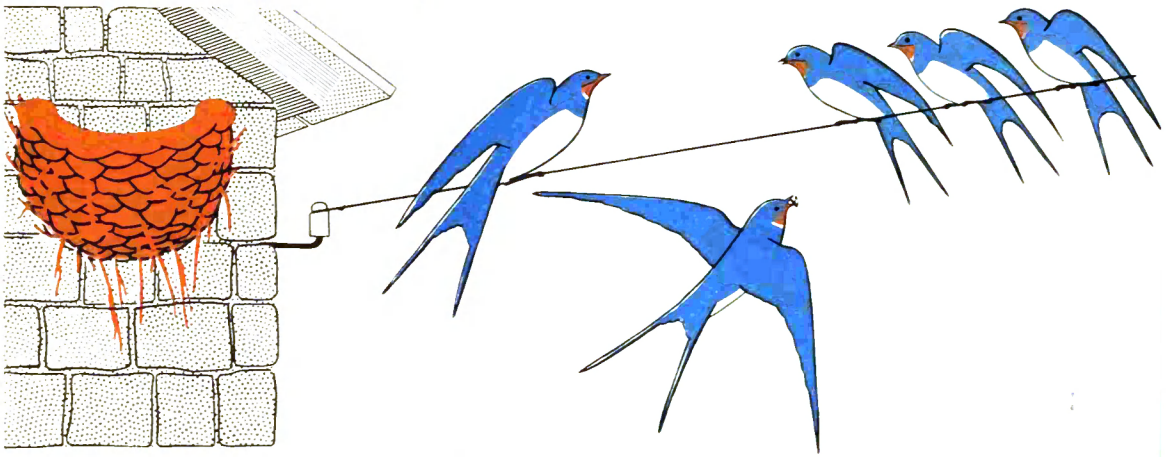




The pelican stores many fish in the big pouch of skin under its beak. The baby, not big enough to go fishing, feeds from the pouch.

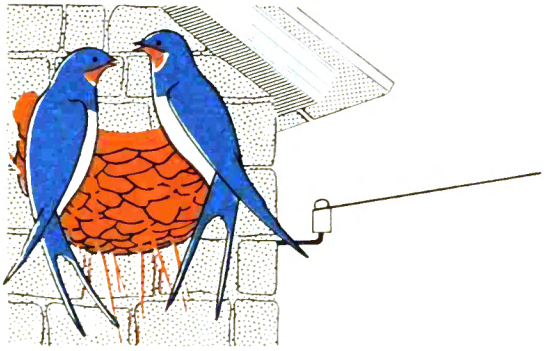


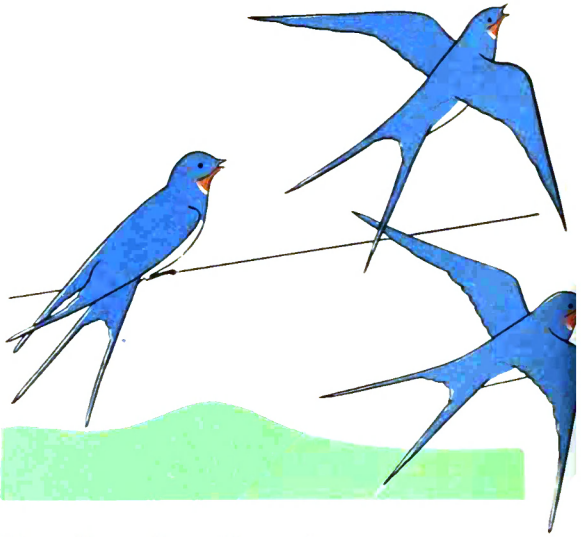
Preparing to Fly Six Thousand Miles



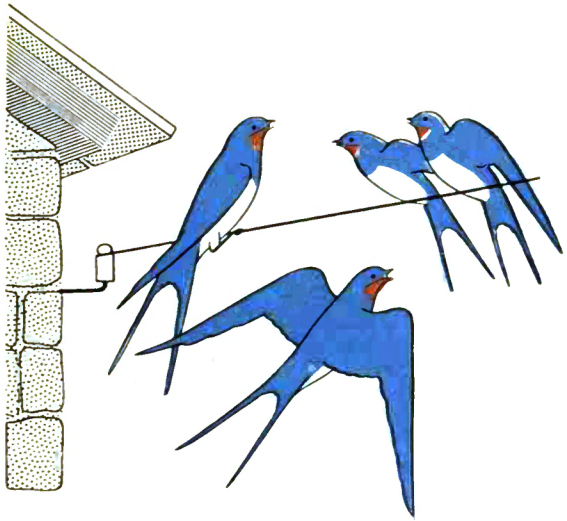
In June, the parent swallows built their nest under the eaves. In July, their first family of chicks are learning to fly.

The parent birds go back to their nest and rear a second brood of chicks.

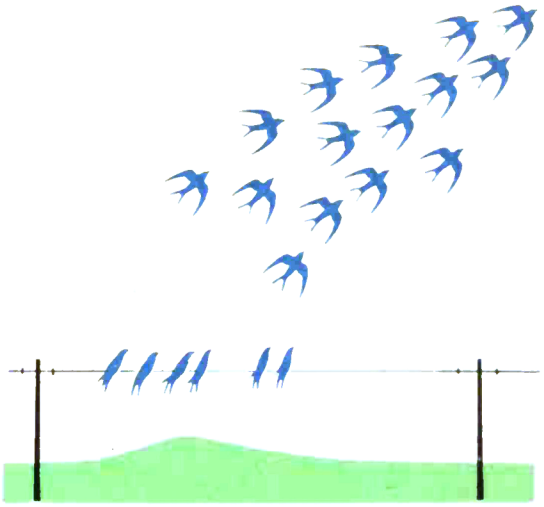




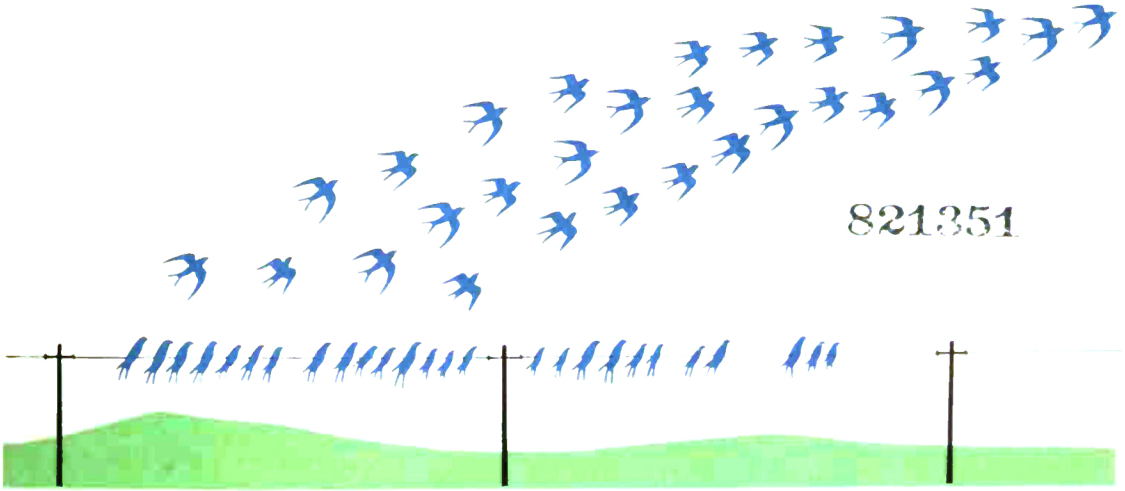
The first family, almost grown up now, fly away.



The second brood stay with the parents until September.



The first, with others, then fly off to warmer lands.



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Parents and babies go later. They may fly 6,000 miles (from Alaska to Brazil, or England to Africa) with only short rests.

Arrows of Geese that Fly from the North

Soon after the swallows go, arrows of wild geese fly south from the Arctic. Wherever we live there are interesting birds for us to watch, all the year round.

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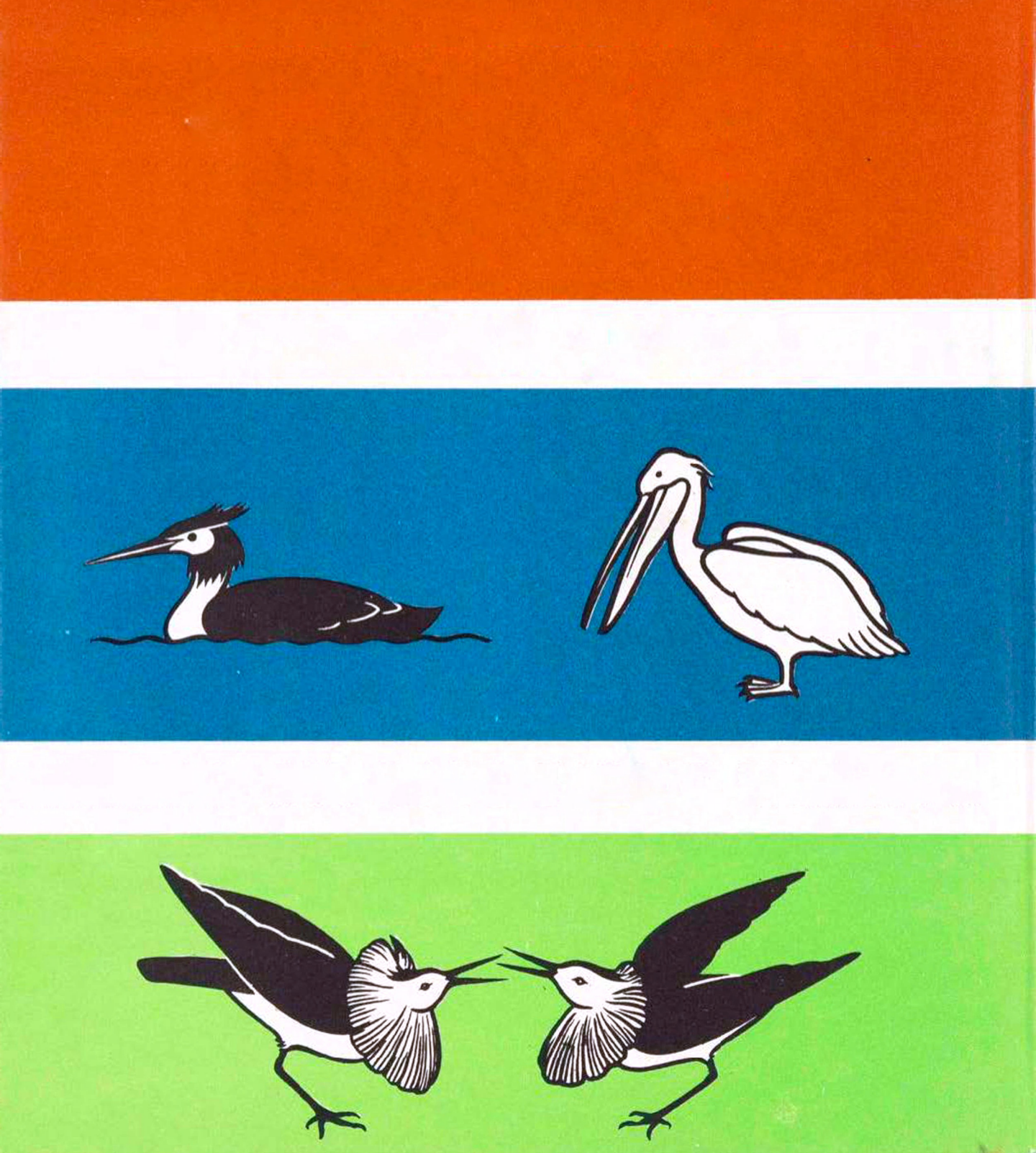
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